

Message Text

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53

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EUR-25 EA-11 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15

COME-00 DRC-01 (ISO) W

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R 011335Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8847

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 3975

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EIND, SF

SUBJ: SAG DECIDES ON SALDANA FOR BILLET PLANT

REF: PRETORIA A-067, MAY 3, 1973

1. ON OCTOBER 30, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS ANNOUNCED SAG DECISION THAT PROPOSED ISCOR BILLET PLANT, ADJUNCT TO SALDANA-SISHEN SCHEME, BE BUILT AT SALDANA. DECISION FOLLOWED SPECIAL STUDY ON ALTERNATIVE SALDANA OR SISHEN SITES. REPORTEDLY DECISION BASED ON PROFITABILITY (ESTIMATED \$1.2 BILLION OVER LIFETIME OF PLANT) AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLOREDS.

2. EARLIER, PRESS HAD CHIDED SAG FOR DELAY IN MAKING DECISION. ISCOR HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH VOEST (AUSTRIA) AND REPORTEDLY HAD REACHED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT PROVIDED PLANT TO BE LOCATED IN SALDANA. PRESUMABLY SAG DECISION NOW WILL BE PERMIT ISCOR-VOEST NEGOTIATIONS TO BE FINALIZED.

3. PRESS HAS ALSO REPORTED GERMAN, JAPANESE, AND U.S. GROUPS HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN JOINING PROJECT. JAPANESE CONGEN REP STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN TALKS WITH ISCOR, GOJ NOT (RPT NOT) WILLING TO AUTHORIZE DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN SA. GERMAN INTEREST NOT (RPT NOT) IDENTIFIED. WE UNAWARE OF ANY

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U.S. INTEREST THOUGH IN ONE PRESS ARTICLE, ARMCO STEEL

INDIRECTLY CITED.

4. MINISTER'S STATEMENT GIVES NO (RPT NO) DATES FOR PROJECT
OR WHEN TENDERS MIGHT BE ISSUED. SOME MONTHS AGO ISCOR OFFICIALS
INDICATED TO EMBOFFS THAT EQUIPMENT FOR PROJECT WOULD BE BID
INTERNATIONALLY. PRESUMABLY THIS STILL HOLDS.
HURD

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